State Guidelines – Accessibility to Information Technology for Individuals with Disabilities – DRAFT v 1.0

Adopted by the Information Services Board (ISB) on TBD

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Introduction

The state of Washington is committed to providing access to information technology to the public and employees, including individuals with disabilities.

Accessibility for individuals with disabilities is a global best practice. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and regulations, and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act promote equal access to public information and services. The World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative promotes access to Web-based information. Together, these laws, regulations and related policies, standards, and guidelines provide best practices for procuring, creating, and maintaining accessible information technology.

These guidelines are designed to:

- Provide the public and employees, including individuals with disabilities, access to information technology.
- Provide agency staff with information necessary to procure, develop, and maintain information technology that is accessible to all individuals.

Statutory Authority

The provisions of RCW 43.105.041 detail the powers and duties of the Information Services Board, including the authority to develop statewide or interagency technical policies, standards, and procedures related to information services.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all executive and judicial branch agencies and educational institutions, as provided by RCW 43.105, that operate, manage, or use Information Technology services or equipment to support critical state business functions.

Guidelines

Information Technology should be procured, developed, maintained, and used so that it is accessible to individuals with disabilities, unless it creates an undue burden on the agency. Information Technology, including Web sites, Web-based applications, software systems, and electronically published documents, should provide the same functionality to individuals with disabilities as it provides to others.

Agencies should implement the following Section 508 Standards and W3C Guidelines to provide equal access to information technology for employees and the public, including individuals with disabilities:

Accessibility Guidelines	Section Overview
Section 508 Subpart A 1194.1 Purpose 1194.2 Application 1194.3 General exceptions 1194.4 Definitions 1194.5 Equivalent facilitation	Subpart A provides an overview of Section 508, its purpose, application, exceptions to the standards, and definitions.
Section 508 Subpart B 1194.21 Software applications and operating systems 1194.22 Web-based intranet and internet information and applications 1194.24 Video and multimedia products. (c) and (d)	Subpart B provides technical standards for Web-based information and applications, and software applications. See *Note below regarding overlap between W3C guidelines and Section 508 standards for Web-based design.
Section 508 Subpart D 1194.41 - Information, documentation, and support	Subpart D contains provisions for end-user documentation and alternative formats.
Web Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Guidelines	The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) contain design principles that represent broad concepts that apply to all Web-based content.

*Note: *Some overlap exists between the W3C Guidelines and the Section 508 Standards particularly in the area of Web-based design. In such cases, agencies are encouraged to select the recommendation or standard that best meets their business needs. Additional information is available online at:* Section 508 and WCAG Comparisons: Note to 1194.22

Maintenance

Technological advances and changes in the business requirements of agencies will necessitate periodic revisions to policies, standards, and guidelines. The Department of Information Services is responsible for routine maintenance of these guidelines to keep them current. Major policy changes require the approval of the ISB.

Appendix A: References and Glossary

References

The Americans with Disabilities Act (Title II, Subtitle A)
http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/pubs/ada.txt

The Americans with Disabilities Act – Code of Federal Regulations (28 CFR 35)
http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/reg2.html

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
http://www.section508.gov

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative
http://www.w3.org/wai

The Information Services Board
http://isb.wa.gov

Glossary

Accessibility. Web sites, Web-based applications, software systems, and published documents or other types of information services that enable equal access to the public and employees, including individuals with disabilities.

Section 508 Standards. A comprehensive set of general, technical, and functional standards that apply to Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Undue burden. According to Section 508, "Undue burden means significant difficulty or expense. In determining whether an action would result in an undue burden, an agency shall consider all agency resources available to the program or component for which the product is being developed, procured, maintained, or used."

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines for creating accessible Web content. The WCAG guidelines are organized by priority and provide checkpoints to assist Web developers to create accessible content.